SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

Vol. VI, No. 5 | P.O. Box 6226A, Washington, D.C. 20015 | March 15, 1976

Super Advisory Board Urged for US Biomedical Research

Creation of what would amount to an advisory high command for all federal biomedical and behavioral research, plus a critical reassessment of the National Cancer Institute's privileged position in biomedical funding, are recommended in a staff-written draft for the final report of the President's Biomedical Research Panel.

The panel was created in 1974 at the instigation of Congress, following the forced resignations of two directors of the National Institutes of Health and an assortment of budgetary and personnel upheavals at that institution (SGR Vol. V, Nos. 4, 11). Chaired by Franklin D. Murphy, a physician and former medical school dean who is chairman of the Times-Mirror Corp., the panel is in the homestretch for the scheduled April 29 delivery of its report to the President. And

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though the draft prepared by the staff has no official standing, and is subject to change, the working realities of full-time staff and part-time panel are such that the draft recommendations almost certainly reflect the staff's assessment of the panel's thinking.

The central issue that concerned the panel is the administrative and budgetary dissonance that has been introduced into biomedical research policy by the selection of cancer and later heart disease as areas meriting priority support. Over the past few years, biomedical politics has been characterized by a division between those who contend that the cancer and heart emphases help sell biomedical research, and those who counter that the ploy may be good politics but it is detrimental to the balanced development of the biomedical research enterprise.

The draft report snakes its way between the two positions and essentially recommends continued exploitation of the political potential of cancer and heart disease while preparations are made to reunify NIH. The conclusion reflects the influence of the imperious Benno Schmidt, the Wall Street investment banker who, as chariman of the President's Cancer Panel, sits *ex officio* on the President's Biomedical Panel. Schmidt, who is the Cancer Panel's link to the White House, takes his duties seriously and devotes a great deal of his own and other people's time to protecting the National Cancer Program. At meetings, he tends to dominate most discussions with lengthy rambles that are heavily larded with references to his numerous close contacts with the political community. Situated on the two panels among political novices who are mainly occupied with fulltime jobs elsewhere, Schmidt has emerged as a powerhouse by virtue of his browbeating manner and repeated intimations of powerful connections of which they know little. The wisdom content of

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In Brief

Torpor continues to characterize legislative motion toward restoration of a White House science office. Both houses of Congress have appointed conferees to settle differences in their bills, but the conferees won't meet until their staffs have arrived at a preliminary agreement. The staffs have so far met three times without coming to agreement on a draft for their bosses.

Newest assignment for the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment: A study of techniques for extracting heat from the oceans. The study was requested by Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.), chairman of the Senate National Ocean Policy Study. Announcement of the study carried a suggestion that ERDA is neglecting the subject, and also noted that Hollings is on the subcommittee that handles ERDA's budget.

The marketplace at work: Median starting salaries for chemists in 1975 either dropped or increased only slightly, depending on degree level, while those for new Ph.D.'s in mathematics showed a decrease from 1974, according to the latest salary report of the Scientific Manpower Commission.

The Health Research Group, a Nader affiliate, has a new publication, Consumer Health Action Network, *which is intended to serve as "a clearinghouse for health action information." To obtain a copy, send $1 to Health Research Group, 2000 P st. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Though purchasing power for research and development in the U.S. has declined to the level of the late 1960's, the attendance of Americans at international scientific congresses has continuously risen and comprises 75% of all attendance, according to Science Indicators — 1974 **(See page 5). The only consolation for the down-at-the-heel theorists is that the attendance of other nations is rising faster than ours.**

Biomedical: New Board's Role Would Extend Beyond HEW

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his positions is a separate matter, but he does often carry the day.

Thus, it is not surprising that the staff paper recommends the establishment of a "Presidential Biomedical and Behavioral Research Panel to provide advice concerning the biomedical and behavioral research programs, *other than the National Cancer Program* (SGR's italics), of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare."

The recommendation adds that the proposed Research Panel "would represent a functional parallel to the unique President's Cancer Panel, which should be retained, but the Research Panel would not be vested with the special budgetary by-pass prerogatives of the President's Cancer Panel." ("By-pass" refers to the exclusion of the National Cancer Institute from traditional budget-review procedures. Rather than working through various departmental layers, it formulates a budget, which the Cancer Panel sends directly to the White House.)

The proposed Research Panel would consist of seven presidential appointees: "Three of the members shall be distinguished biomedical scientists, one of whom is actively involved in biomedical research; two of the members shall be distinguished biobehavioral scientists, one of whom is experienced in the neurosciences and one of whom is experienced in clinical research; and two of the members shall be representatives of the general public who are distinguished for public service. . . ."

Meeting 12 times a year, the Panel would report directly to the President and also submit an annual report concerning not only HEW's but all of the federal government activities in biomedical and behavioral research. Its concerns would include "any special needs of these research programs, and any problems concerning the execution of federally supported biomedical and behavioral research."

In addition, the Research Panel would "assume responsibility for conducting periodic reviews of the state-of-the-science" in programs conducted by NIH and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA).

On the sensitive issue of getting cancer research "back into the fold," as the matter is often referred to, the draft opted for cautious movement. First of all, it recommends that the proposed Panel "shall, after a reasonable period of time, investigate the feasibility and practicability of merging the functions and activities of the President's Cancer Panel with those of the Research Panel." And then, in a cagey section concerning the status of the National Cancer Institute, it offers the following:

"While the Panel supports the continuation of the special status of the NCI, it is cognizant of differing recommendations of other groups" — notably some of its own advisory subpanels, representatives of various NIH advisory bodies, and witnesses from those voluntary health organizations whose preferred diseases have been crowded off stage by cancer.

The draft report continues: "The Panel recognizes and supports the priority for cancer research established by Congress. The special features of the legislation that provide the means for insuring priority are proving their value. In the total range of its recommendations, the

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Following are other recommendations in the staff-written draft of the final report of the President's Biomedical Research Panel:

- Establish full authority of the NIH Director "over all Institutes in matters of policy, budget development, program planning, personnel, and general coordination and administration." Also, provide the Director "with authority to reserve up to 1% of each Institute's budget for correcting imbalances, for exploiting new opportunities, and for emergencies."
- Preserve the present system of Presidential appointment of the NIH director with confirmation by the Senate and no fixed term.
- HEW and NIH should discourage the creation of new categorical Institutes. In addition, NIH should "attempt to work towards consolidation of categorical Institutes into Bureaus to encourage broader thinking in interrelated fields and reduce the span of control problems of the Office of the Director of NIH."
- Federal training grant support for NIH and ADAMHA should be considered "an essential component of biomedical and behavioral research policy."
- Amend the Public Health Service Act so that research designs and protocols contained in grant and contract proposals will be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act until funds have been received by the applicant.
- Congress should establish "special personnel arrangements" so that NIH and ADAMHA can have more freedom in disposing of employees they do not care to keep on the payroll.

Great Britain: Big Science Feels Budget Axe . . .

London. In a desperate effort to halt the precipitate decline in Britain's economy, the British government last month announced plans for massive cuts in public expenditure over the next five years. The axe, if indeed it falls, will cut deeply into some of the Labor government's most cherished programs, including health and education, and along the way, it will slice into the country's basic science and higher education activities.

The prospects are for gradual erosion in support for so-called big science programs — with two particle accelerators headed for extinction and space science due for a lean time. Support for less capital intensive endeavors will be put into a holding pattern, and there will be a virtual freeze on university teaching and research jobs between now and the end of the 1970's. And superimposed on that trend is a deliberate move to give priority to research likely to have some social or economic payoff.

The reason for the dismal outlook is that the government has been forced to try to ease the crippling effects of running a massive, and growing, national debt. The problem has been building up for the past three years, a period when galloping inflation coupled with Kenesian policies aimed at staving off high unemployment during the recession by increased government spending, resulted in huge budget deficits. The government has consequently been forced to borrow heavily on the private and international capital markets, and it is now heavily pressed to meet the interest payments.

Thus, after an extremely painful reexamination of longstanding socialist policies, the Labor government found itself recommending last month that there should be massive cuts in spending on social services, education and defense in order to pay off the interest on the national debt, and to channel some aid into manufacturing industry. But even the most sanguine economic analysts here admit that the proposed cuts will not be sufficient to cure the country's deep-rooted economic malaise.

For a start, the government's own figures indicate that the proposed spending cuts will not be sufficient even to match projected interest payments. In other words, the national debt will continue to rise inexorably, unless there is a further round of tax increases — a dismal prospect for a country already strapped with one of the highest tax rates in Europe.

Underlying all this is the distant hope that worldwide economic recovery will eventually filter through to Britain and help lift the sagging economy, and that revenues from North Sea oil will eventually help pay off some of the national debt in the early 1980's.

Against that background, it is hardly surprising that the government intends to take the knife to some science and technology programs. Indeed, it can be argued that research and development have fared better than many government activities. But the proposed cuts will follow hard on the heels of a period of tight science budgets, and they also reinforce the trend of diverting support from basic research to more socially useful programs. As one government official privately lamented, "It's no longer possible to argue that science here should be supported for its own sake."

The government provides the bulk of support for basic research in Britain, largely through a system of re-

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BIOMEDICAL *(Continued from Page 2)*

Panel is seeking to strengthen the whole character and operation of the NIH and thereby attempting to minimize the need in the future for the Congress to perceive that high-priority biomedical research and related action programs cannot be pressed effectively by the NIH and encompassed within its management structure.

"Therefore, the Panel recommends that the special status of the NCI not be changed at this time, but that the Congress and the President periodically assess the situation to determine whether the special budget bypass authority of the NCI remains necessary and whether the President's Cancer Panel cannot in time be incorporated into the President's Biomedical and Behavioral Research Panel — first in terms of membership, then organizationally."

What this amounts to, of course, is a diplomatic maneuver aimed at waiting out Benno Schmidt, whose second term as chairman of the Cancer Panel expires in less than two years.—DSG

Science & Government Report © 1976

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Independently published by *Science & Government Report,* Inc., twice monthly, except once each in January, July and August. Annual subscription: Institutions, $65 (two years, $120); individuals, $44 (two years, $75). Editorial offices at 3736 Kanawha St., N.W., Washington, DC 20015. Tel. (202) 244-4135. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC. Please address all subscription correspondence to Box 6226A, Northwest Station, Washington, DC 20015. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. SGR is available on Xerox University Microfilms.

. . . Science Spending Frozen for Next 5 Years

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search councils which distribute grants to university scientists; it also operates its own laboratories, and administers Britain's share of international science programs.

The research councils have been going through a period of change in the past three years, however, in the wake of a major study of Britain's R&D policies, conducted by Lord Rothschild. The Rothschild proposals, in short, have resulted in some funds being transferred from the councils to government departments. The idea is to try to ensure that a larger proportion of government-supported research is more closely tied to national needs.

All of that is logical for a country trying to make the best use of limited resources, but it was naturally greeted with some resentment by scientists in the universities, who feared that some of their basic research support would be lost. And that resentment is likely to deepen over the next few years if the government's spending proposals are carried out.

The proposals announced last month would allow no increase in support for the research councils for the next five years, they would reduce defense R&D support, and perhaps lead to a decline in Britain's contributions to some international science activities. The bulk of the cuts, like those for other activities, would come after 1977, when it is hoped that the effect on unemployment of large reductions in government expenditure will be mitigated by Britain sharing in a worldwide economic recovery.

The cuts in R&D will be selective, falling chiefly on big science projects such as high-energy physics, space research and astronomy, and some of the savings on those programs will be redistributed to other science activities. The bulk of the big science programs are supported by the Science Research Council (SRC), whose annual budget, now about $200 million, is expected to decline by about 2% a year for the next 5 years.

According to SRC officials, the immediate impact of the cuts will be to close two particle accelerators. One, near Manchester, will cease operation in 1977, while the other, at the Rutherford Laboratory in Berkshire, will probably shut down a year or so later. There will then be no high-energy accelerators left in Britain, and all

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3 European Nations Scramble to Provide Fusion Site

The practice of R&D pork barrel politics, once a thriving business in the United States, has been much in evidence in Europe recently. The big prize is a $120-million nuclear fusion machine to be built by the European Economic Community (EEC). Three competing countries are hoping that they will house the machine, but after months of bickering, no agreement has been reached on the site.

The machine, known as the Joint European Torus (JET), is a natural for a joint European endeavor since its cost is probably beyond the means of a single country, and several national centers have already built up considerable expertise in fusion research. It would be built under the auspices of Euratom, the European nuclear energy authority, and some 80% of the costs would be borne by the EEC.

It was hoped that a decision on the site for JET would be reached by the end of last year, but with three countries in the running, and much politicking behind the scenes at EEC headquarters in Brussels, agreement has so far proved elusive.

The three contenders are Italy, with a site at Ispra, which already houses the EEC's Joint Research Centre; Britain, with a site at Culham, where preliminary studies for JET have been taking place, and West Germany, with a site at Garching.

The matter came to a head last month at an abortive meeting of the Council of Research Ministers of the EEC member countries in Brussels. It was hoped that the meeting would choose a site and allocate money to the project, but after much argument, it ended in deadlock. The meeting did not even agree that JET should be built.

It now seems likely that the issue will be put before a meeting of European Foreign Ministers next month, and it is expected that a final decision will be taken by the next meeting of the Council of Research Ministers, in June.

The JET project is important in many respects. It would be the first major research project undertaken by the expanded European community. Moreover, without a large fusion machine, European fusion research would be forced to take a permanent back seat to the Soviet and American efforts. Indeed, fears are already being expressed in Europe that unless the JET decision is reached, European fusion researchers will soon leave for the United States, where funds are plentiful. In fact, according to press reports in Britain, attempts have already been made to lure physicists from Culham to Princeton.

Science Board Tells All, Plus More, About State of R&D

In the style of nervous people who talk too much, the elders of the scientific community have lately taken to the production of voluminous studies that purport to demonstrate that the federal government should spend a lot of money on research.

The latest of these, bearing the opaque title *Science Indicators — 1974,* has recently been issued by the National Science Board, which is the policymaking body of the National Science Foundation. In 242 packed pages, it tells virtually all there is to be told about budgets, employment, relative international standings in patents, innovations, spending, and so forth. The second of what is apparently intended as a biennial series, *Indicators* adds up to the conclusion that the U.S. remains strong, but is slipping in international standings in patents, a few fields of research, some aspects of technological innovation, and proportion of gross national product devoted to R&D.

The backers of *Indicators* contend that their work, in draft form, was carefully studied by Mr. Ford's budget makers and contributed to the relatively generous treatment that R&D received in the budget for Fiscal 1977.

In any case, all collectors of R&D data should have *Science Indicators — 1974.* Copies can be obtained for $4.60 each from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Order by Stock Number 038-000-00253-8.

BRITAIN *(Continued from Page 4)*

Britain's experimental particle physics will be performed at the European accelerator at CERN. Another area to feel the knife will be space research, with Britain's now minuscule space program being cut back almost to the point of extinction, and there may also be some reduction in British contributions to the European Space Agency. There will also be no new capital expenditures in astronomy.

Some of those savings would be channeled into support for scientific research projects which require less capital equipment, the idea being to spread out the money to as many scientists as possible. The Medical Research Council is expected to get a modest increase this year, for example.

But there is, unfortunately, another factor which could eat into university science programs quite substantially: the government has proposed that general financial support for the universities should be restricted. In particular, it has suggested that "capital expenditure on new buildings . . . will continue to be severely restricted and more intensive use of available premises will accordingly be required." Officials in the research councils are concerned that such restrictions will cause a gradual deterioration in science facilities, with the result that pressure will be placed on the science budget for capital expenditures which would normally come from other parts of the government.

Moreover, the spending proposals would lead to a very depressed academic job market. The government has decreed that Britain's universities and colleges should be allowed to expand by only a modest amount over the next five years, so that by 1981 they would be able to accommodate only about 600,000 students, or about 15% of the college age-group. The previous target was 640,000.

The reduced target, according to the government's own analysis, means that "there will be little if any scope for increasing total staff numbers" after the next academic year. Already, there is a virtual freeze on hiring new faculty at many universities, the average age of faculty members is growing, and an increasing proportion is holding tenured posts. Consequently, there is now considerable rigidity built into the universities, and little new blood is being brought into the system.

While it is certainly true to say that the government's spending proposals are far from being the last word — they will be reviewed each year, and sharp cuts in public spending will be resisted if industrial recovery does not pick up — it is clear that there will have to be some economizing in the next few years. Since few politicians interest themselves in such arcane matters as basic research, it is virtually certain that big science in Britain is headed for a lean time.—CN

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Under Congressional Fire, NSF Cuts Curriculum Grants

After a season of bitter controversy over the role of the National Science Foundation in funding elementary and high school science course development — particularly courses on human behavior and social science — the agency has decided to scuttle a handful of projects in which it has already invested millions of dollars.

The decision takes place against a background of some of NSF's best friends in Congress — among them Rep. James Symington (D-Mo.) — encountering election-year assaults for their support of the Foundation. NSF insists that it throttled the programs for purely non-political reasons, but the Foundation's past record in dealing with the political rightwing does not inspire much confidence. In short, the episode looks like a political sell-out, though, ironically, those whom it may have been intended to placate seem to consider it an inadequate morsel.

Social Science Report

The cancellation of the projects was reported to the staff of the House Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology on February 27 by NSF's Acting Assistant Director for Science Education, Harvey Averch, at the same moment Averch's staff was telephoning grantees to tell them their projects would not be renewed. The cancellations affect four math courses and the two-year-old Human Behavior Curriculum Project sponsored by the American Psychological Association (APA). Other projects will be continued, abbreviated, modified or otherwise handled as NSF sees fit.

The move followed a National Science Board resolution generally approving the cuts. But, it came as a surprise to grantees, who were dismayed both by the action and by NSF's failure to explain it in writing as late as a week after Congress had been informed. It apparently angered even Rep. John B. Conlon (R-Ariz.), whose passionate opposition last year to the NSF-funded "Man: A Course of Study" (MACOS) touched off Congressional and public debate over NSF curriculum development and led to NSF internal evaluation and a full-scale review of all 19 such projects by outside panelists last December.

Conlon wants to see all NSF curriculum projects ended and has proposed a one-year moratorium on them. An aide, George Archibald, sharply criticized the December review which preceded NSF's decision as a "five-day cram course" and said NSF has "thrown five programs to the wolves" to take off the heat.

Panelists who reviewed the projects in meetings held December 8-12 did not have time or access to all developers' materials to enable them to do a thorough review, he stated, and he added that the conclusions they reached on some of the programs NSF is continuing are as negative as those on projects the agency is discontinuing. Panelists were not allowed to see the comments of the scientist reviewers who originally passed judgment on the proposals because of NSF's confidentiality rules, he said. "These guys have been had." he said referring to the grantees.

In short, Conlon's office ironically expresses the same views privately muttered by grantees: that NSF has buckled under political pressure and is attempting to cut its losses and at the same time salvage what it can.

Averch said NSF is not as cowardly as it looks. In an interview with SGR, Averch said he made the decisions to cancel on the basis of technical merit and other factors. He considered the panel reviews, sought the advice of his evaluation and program staffs, and received the approval of NSF Director H. Guyford Stever.

The decisions came after a long, detailed process put in motion as a result of Congressional concern, he said, but the decisions themselves reflect a combination of budget, management and quality considerations and a reassessment of NSF's proper place in supporting curriculum design, as well as the external clamor.

He said critics have raised some important questions about science education "that would have been asked anyway" even without the allegations and charges that NSF patronage of curriculum projects could thwart local control of education or twist the minds of youngsters. Those questions, said Averch, concern the conditions for NSF involvement in curriculum development, which he now perceives as more restricted than in the past.

In recent testimony to the House science subcommittee, Averch described the "gap-filling" mission of NSF in science education, stating that federal involvement is warranted if need is high and the private sector fails to produce. The agency will conduct needs assessment itself, and new projects will be started on a small scale with "clear go, no-go decision points" established to closely monitor their progress, he explained.

Averch said the reevaluation is also tied to the growth and changing nature of NSF from an agency which concerned mostly scientists to one with a much larger constituency. Many science education programs were conceived years ago, he said, before there was call for the

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NSF: Psychological Association Considering Appeal

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structure, strategic planning, and command and control functions required now.

· NSF may have experienced what he called "a shock of recognition" that some criticisms lodged against it had merit. Nevertheless, on the basis of quality alone, Averch said he would have favored cutting off some projects much earlier. Budget stringency — he is operating with about half this year's original request — helped the decision-making considerably.

Although the action came as a surprise, it could hardly be called sudden. The NSF and Congress asked for a review of the programs last year, and the December evaluation, conducted by some 70 consultants whose names had been sought from about 50 organizations representing science, education, administration and consumers, was publicly announced. Project directors were not asked to take part, but they later received copies of panelists' comments.

However, though some reviews were highly critical, they failed to give any clues that specific projects would be halted. Panelists were asked to respond to a set of nine review questions focusing on the need for the curriculum materials under scrutiny, their purpose, their scientific and educational soundness, their cost, their potential effects and other matters. They were not asked to decide which projects should go. That was a "command decision," said Averch.

For example, one of the more controversial of the projects to be dropped, the human behavior curriculum, received a critical but mixed review. The project, directed by Carleton College psychologist John Bare under the auspices of the American Psychological Association, aimed at developing a set of 30 modules, or mini-courses, on topics ranging from addiction to the family. NSF has already spent more than a half a million dollars on the project, about 11 modules are currently in the works, and Bare's most recent proposal asked for about $1 million more.

The panel concluded that while there may be need for more high school psychology materials, there was little, if any, documented need for the project's particular modules. While some panelists found some of the materials fascinating, others raised serious questions about possible value-laden and emotion-laden content. Panelist Douglas Adler, recommended by the American Historical Association, expressed a recurrent criticism that the nature of some of the materials crossed the line between teaching psychology and setting up a clinical situation in the classroom.

Panelists noted that extensive material on sexual behavior would no doubt offend some communities and took issue with one suggested activity — that students keep a sexual experience diary — without noting that the project's own internal advisory committee had rejected that exercise. Other objections were that the materials might be too sophisticated and difficult for high schoolers, that the modules would require unusually high teacher competence and a good deal of teacher training and the expense of the materials.

The panel also criticized the lack of parent involvement in the project, though students are included and Bare's most recent proposal calls for including parents.

Averch said that "every curriculum is controversial" and that alone is insufficient reason to discontinue a project. But, he said that many developers have failed to make clear the implicit values built into their products.

In the absence of written explanation from NSF as to why their programs are being dropped, grantees have been hard put to respond to the announced action. A dispirited Bare noted NSF has apparently changed the ground rules under which projects were funded without telling the players about it. At APA, there has been some talk of appealing the decision by any means available.

Averch, however, seems firm for the moment. He said NSF would "negotiate" with grantees to help them wind up their projects, perhaps offering some additional funds, but there are no plans to renew them.

Meanwhile, it appears that rather than cooling the controversy over curriculum development, NSF's action may intensify the debate. Conlon, whose spokesman chalks it up to another instance of NSF's "shabby" management, shows no signs of being appeased, and grantees are miffed.

Whether you call it maturation of a federal science agency or caving in to the cantankerousness of a Congressional minority, NSF increasingly is taking on a political hue.—PM

Minorities in Science Committee

Lucius Gregg Jr., vice president of the First National Bank of Chicago, has been appointed chairman of a newly created Committee on the Education and Employment of Minority Group Members in Science, which is part of the Commission on Human Resources of the National Academy of Science's National Research Council.

Science "Coordination" in Britain: Who's in Charge?

London. British scientists, like their American counterparts, have been complaining recently about the lack of scientific advice at the center of national policymaking. And with good reason.

Nearly two years ago, the chief science adviser to the British government, Sir Alan Cottrell, resigned his post in the Cabinet office to go back to academic life. Since then, the job has been filled on a temporary basis by his Deputy, Robert Press, who has kept a profile so low as to be almost invisible. Disquiet about this lack of scientific advice to the British government finally broke into the open last month, through a curious exchange of letters between the Select Committee on Science and Technology — a Parliamentary committee which has no legislative authority but which conducts inquiries into British science policy — and Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

The committee informed Wilson that "The failure to fill this vacancy [the Chief Science Adviser's job] has caused considerable dismay in the scientific community, and has raised doubts about the sincerity of the government's commitment to the importance of an independent scientific voice in the formulation of policies at the highest level." It therefore asked Wilson to appoint somebody as soon as possible, or explain why he feels no need for a scientific adviser.

In an evasive reply, Wilson noted that Press is due to retire next Summer, and indicated that if there are to be changes in the science-policy machinery, they will be made when Press leaves. He added that he has been giving much thought to the matter.

Aside from the lack of central science policy advice, there is also a disquieting muddle over who is responsible for coordinating government research and development in Britain. A couple of years ago, responsibility for such matters was given to the Lord President of the Council, a member of the House of Commons and a Cabinet member. Sure enough, a few weeks ago, when the chairman of the Select Committee wrote to the Lord President of the Council to inquire whether he still retained ministerial responsibility for coordinating government R&D, the reply was affirmative.

Curiously, however, a few days later the Select Committee office received a somewhat agitated call from the Lord President's Office saying that there had been a mistake: the responsibility in fact lies with the Lord Privy Seal, a member of the House of Lords and also a Cabinet member.

Since the people who are supposed to be cocodinating science and technology in the government are not sure who is responsible, it is safe to assume that little coordination is being done. And, to add to that impression, a committee of the chief scientists from each ministry, which is supposed to act as the main coordinating committee, has not met for months.

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